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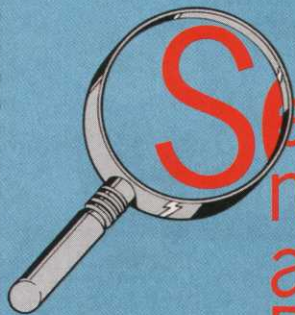
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■ SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

dips

Loyal fans of Out of Bounds understand, and most likely share, my predilection for foods that fail to do favors for the waistline and cholesterol level. I have waxed scrumptiously during the past decade about all sorts of crackers, candy, chips, chili and even Charleston Chews.

With the football season alternately winding down and heating up and the weather turning — for those of us in not so tropical climes — a bit blustery, it seemed appropriate to turn our tummies to the friend of the snack. Too often it's the accoutrements that get treated like unwelcome cousins at holiday gatherings. How soon we forget the beauty and diversity of that most wonderful trimming — the dip.

Connoisseurs of proper winter feasts should think twice before grabbing easily packaged dips in the local dairy case, for a mere few minutes of elbow grease will leave guests begging for your delectable concoctions. For space purposes, we've limited ourselves to the big three.

California dip. Perhaps my earliest food memory involves this classic with celery, although my palate now prefers this snack with a ridged potato chip. It's almost too simple to make — one bag of onion soup mix and 16 ounces of sour cream. Beat them together. Put it in the fridge for two hours. Eat it.

NO, WE'RE NOT TALKING

ABOUT *GOLFDOM* EDITORS

BY MARK LUCE



However, I have discovered that additional soup mix (up to two bags) make a far better dip. Without the extra mix, the sour cream tends to dominate. A variety of additions can round it out: maybe some dill or dashes of celery salt. For the truly decadent, one-quarter cup of blue cheese crumbles, one-third cup of crumbled bacon and one-quarter cup of smashed walnuts will yield true dip indulgence. But beware: Do not use low-fat sour cream, or the dip will lose its miraculous powers.

Guacamole. Made fresh, not from a powder or mix, this Mexican dish can liven up countless meals or just plain ol' tortilla chips. Mine (well, my wife's, really) calls for four avocados. Mash them up. Then finely chop a small red onion, two medium-sized tomatoes and half of a bunch of cilantro. Squeeze the juice of two limes over the top, and swirl it together in a bowl. Top with sea salt to taste. Remind yourself that the Aztecs considered guacamole to be an aphrodisiac.

Crab dip. Again, simple preparation. One box of cream cheese (softened a bit), one bottle of cocktail sauce and a small can of crab (strained). Those who wear fancy pants will layer the dip, spreading the cream cheese on a platter, topping it with the cocktail sauce and then sprinkling the crab on top. Made that way, it's rather hard to handle, so I prefer mixing it all in one big bowl and putting in the fridge for an hour or two.

Zesty cocktail sauce will give the dip a bit more bite, as will fresh horseradish. Doubling the crab doesn't hurt anything either. Any type of cracker tastes great with the dip, but Wheat Thins seem made for crab dip.

Happy snacking.

P.S. Keeping with tradition, here's a Super Bowl prediction: Patriots 212, Cowboys 17.

Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, where he believes dips should be the foundation of the food pyramid. You can reach him at mssluce@everestkc.net

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